THE MEASURE
A JOURNAL OF POETRY

Including Thirteen Poets — — — — — —

For an Extension of the Poetry Movement — —
— — — — — — — — **by Padraic Colum**

A Prejudiced Word on Amy Lowell — — —
— — — — — — — **by Maxwell Anderson**

Announcement of New Editors — — — —

$2.00 by the Year — Single copies 25c — Number 6, Aug. 1921
Published Monthly at 449 West 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

Entered as second-class matter February 28, 1921, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879

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Three Poems

I

THE LAND TURTLE

I AM the seer in the cool earth,
I am the listener in grey fields,
Stones and plants are known to me;
I am a hermit in a hard cell,
In my cloister all sound is hushed.

I do not hear the wind among the stars,
I listen to a blowing under earth;
I have eaten dust,
I am snake and vulture,
I am dragon and Sphynx,
I am a witch full of hate.

Man, disturb not my loneliness,
Full of magic am I and soothsaying.
Are you full of silences
To tell the runes on my house,
These scars of roots and rocks?

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I murmur unto you, passing one
Who walk in light, my deep wisdom:
That which is Light, will some day be Darkness,
The things in Darkness will some day be in Light;
Blossoms will fall to dust,
Out of dust blossoms will grow;
In humbleness you shall bend low:
Flowers slumber in roots,
Rocks shall bear fruit.

II

THE TREE

I, THE homeless one on the far plain,
Am the home of God, of birds and winds;
I am he who is wrapped in shadow,
I am the breaker of the storms from the north,
I am the solitary,
I am the silent one in the falling snow,
I am dusk, evening and night.
My trunk is an old myth,
My leaves are murmuring legends;
Men with rapt faces look up at me:
Lovers, poets and beggars.
Stars are my blossoms and fruit,
I am holy, I am eternal:
God sings in me, birds and winds.

III

THE GRAIN FIELD

I AM the grey sweat of the sower
In the furrows of the field,
Grey rains rush over me;

I am in the sun a waving sea,
I am in the winds the harp of God.
I am the wide flowing of His garment
In the silence of noon;
I am longing,
I am the prayer of the poor of the world,
I am the appeaser of their hunger:
I am golden earth,
I am bread.

Hans Trausil.

The Pigeons

YOU did not hear them stirring in the eaves,—
Is this a memory you will not know?
The rain swept loudly in the lilac leaves
Against your house a Spring or two ago.

The rain fell through the dark, hour after hour;
There was its song and wet warmth of the air
Rising and failing, driven by the shower
Back to the steaming earth and prisoned there.

I was perplexed the hour that we awoke
To what the Spring had quickened in the ground. . . .
As pigeons troubled by the rain first spoke
I could not name their unfamiliar sound.

George O'Neil

Arabia Felix

ARABIA FELIX is its lovely name,
A sound wherewith to woo,
Where the spent traveler came,
Farther than Khatmandu
It lay, deep in the shifting sands,
In the hot heart of wind-worn hills
Among the desert lands.

There was the lake
And groves of tamarisks,
And the sole tree
The nesting Phoenix knew,
Thither came merchants down from Tartary
And bearded men from far off Xanadu,
Knowing the road about the mountain-steep,
Where the old sea-murg lived among the trees,
And the White Thirty birds beloved of God,
Which no man sees.

No man can come there,
Save he know
The river road through thunder-smitten passes,
Where the small caravans can go,
Led by the little road-wise, belled she-asses,
Bearing seed-pearls and sesam winnowed fine,
Henna and hashish for the dancing girls,
And turquoise-matrix from the soldan's mine,
And sweet, palm wine.

There is a story told, how long ago,
A traveler found it in the desert hills,
Wandering half mad with thirst till he drank sand,
Then suddenly he heard a sound of rills,
And saw green grass,
A valley land,
Where living waters ran,
And there the city stood beside its lake,
And the grim warders let him pass,
For pity's sake,
Into the town as fine as Ispahan.

Now he can talk of nothing but that place,
He must be daft,
On desert nights beside the dried-dung fires,
When dreams of youth come back and old desires,
But no one yet has laughed,
For only truth is spoken by his race,
And he can talk of nothing but that place
And of a girl there with a *houri's* face.

"It is beloved by heaven," so he says,
"Its stars burn nearer to the earth,
And low-voiced merchants chaffer in its cool bazaars
Amid sane mirth—
It is the domed town of the heat *mirage,*
Close to the heart of God,
Where dwells Laladj."

Hervey Allen

A Song for Sleep

(Adagio)

LET me down, softly, softly,
A hundred fathoms deep,
Into your realm of quietness,
Into your sea, O Sleep;
Fold leisure up in my fingers ten
Like a coral-colored charm;
Weight my eyelids with your heavy pearls,
And where your surge rolls warm
Let me slip through your wavy dreaming, dreaming
An instant of emerald and gold,
Of sapphire and wonder and song and thunder,
More than my heart can hold,
Then down, down, down where silence is spread
Dark and soft and cool,
Where peace, like a golden lily, blossoms
In a black and sacred pool.
Make my bed far from the wrong and ruddy sun—
Stay for my sake the kind and comely moon—
I am weary, weary of the light of the world—
Do not wake me soon.

Waking Up

(Allegro)

LIFT up the veils! Cast them away!
Unfold the black, the dusk, the grey,
Unwind the mauve and violet
That shimmering say, "Forget . . . forget . . ."
When I lie down to sleep at night.
Now lift the innermost veil of white,

Sheer blanched oblivion lift from me
That my reviving soul may see
The world of amber and of rose
Where, flower-like, the morning grows.
I will lift up my hands on high,
Saluting morning in the sky;
Oh, I will pluck it out of space
And in its beauty hide my face!

Marguerite Wilkinson

Roads

THERE are roads through the trees that the birds know,
Roads through the high trees.
All day the red and blue and green streaks
Travel the roads on the grave affairs of birds;
Gay wings in the sun
And strange white wings in the dark—
Toward love and death.

There are roads in the sea that the fish know
And all the years long the light quiver of fish
Speeds through the roads of the sea,
Speeds the stern business of fish—
Life and the business of life, and death.

There are roads through the peaks
That the winds know,—
Roads through the stars that the world knows,
And my thoughts have roads
Where only my thoughts may go.
Under the tumbling sea
And out through the sagging net of the stars,
Through the broken net of the stars
My thoughts go out, like the birds,
And the winds and the quivering fish,
Toward love and death.

Henry Bellamann

Women Play Mandolines Before Night

THE lights are going out where the mandolines play,
Where the wild-eyed, soft-eyed women play.
I will have none of all this twilight tinkle,
I am going away.

They look upon the moon, it is their heart,
They think the stars are fluttering,
They think your captured heart is listening,
Mine listening.

I am going away from all this longing and feeling,
Heart-feeling on fingers mad.
Do you know of something merciful and madder,
Cold and glad?

Do you think that a river rumbling low and forever,
Taking a lord's way round the hills,
Is medicine for ears too full of tinkling
Syllables?

For I'll have no more of woman's desecration,
Making the moon a womanish thing
And making the ice-cold, far away, bitter stars
A fluttering.

Edward Sapir

Autumnal

THIS is the sad grey weather that you like:
The sad frost climbing up the stiffening trees,
The wind ruffling the water, and the sound
Of crisping leaves that whisper to the ground,
And the November sky, profoundly grey,
Austerer than all these.
The thinning wind and the grey waters make
A beauty cold as music for your sake.
And in my heart the music is like waves
In ignorant tossing over defeated graves.

Babette Deutsch

The Undying

CAN nothing cast a shadow on the wall?
I tell you someone's stirring in the hall—
I see his dripping tallow candle flare
As he comes winding, winding up the stair—
You *must* believe me—with his golden head
Thrown back in gesturing of youth long dead.
(What is that? The ticking of the clock?)
He wears black breeches and a satin stock,
And ruffles fall about his hands in fine
Lace folds as mellow as the candle-shine
Itself. Tonight is such a breathless night,
I wonder at the flaring of the light . . .
So still, so still, except for his sounds. Stop!
That creaking was the fifth stair from the top.
I tell you someone's there. What does he want,
Climbing these stairs? Why does he come to haunt
This ancient house and me now at the last,
A youth alive with beauty that is past?

Carolyn Hall

Rosemary, Rosemary

YOU are good for bruised lips—so they say,
Rosemary, Rosemary, ghost of a flower,
Evanescent as yesterday's spray—
So tearful, so tiny, fading away
Into the moor like the breath of a shower—
You are good for bruised lips—so they say.

Softer than fragrance, less than mist,
Sometime, healingly, you shall be pressed
Here on this hurt, which is my breast,
Here on my mouth where I was kissed,
Memory—memory—you shall rest,
Softer than fragrance, less than mist.

Winifred Welles

Monotony

IT happened all t'once one day when I was pitchin' straw
To bed the old mare. (It was Fall an' nights was gittin' raw)
I seen her starin' through the pane so kind o' childishly
It made the creeps go up my back. I tu'ned around to see
What caught her eyes, rememberin' the way they'd sometimes gleam
When up the road from Centreville the dust would bring a team.
But no, there warn't a thing in sight. I hurried to the door
An' opened it nor rightly knew why I had left the chore
Half done like that to go to her nor that the clammy sweat
All over me was but a dread o' what I'd never met. . . .
The kitchen shone as neat as wax. She always was a hand
To keep it so, but at that hour I couldn't understand
Why she warn't busy, why the stove was cold instead o' hot—
She'd never missed a meal on time if I was there or not.
'Twas close on sunset. As she stood her apron caught the hue
An' made her look unearthly like. "Nell, what's gone wrong with you
To make you stare that half baked way?" I snapped, but she stayed dumb,
Her face against the window pane where the geranium
An' mignonette an' heliotrope she'd planted in a row
Looked reachin' out to catch the sun before it had to go!
I couldn't seem to bear that glory shinin' round her head
Nor her strange stillness. "Tell me, Ma, what's plaguin' you?" I said.
She laffed then an' my blood run cold, because it was the kind
O' scary sound that women make when they have lost their mind. . . .
An' so I had to send her off. . . . I've got her in a place
The state provides. The doctors tell me it's a hopeless case. . . .

But to this day I'm blessed if I can tell what turned her queer—
She hadn't stepped foot out-o'-doors for nigh on thirty year!

Amanda Benjamin Hall

Prairie Pictures

I. A Church

THE hush of Sabbath. . . . From the picket gate
To the bald platform a plank walk runs straight.
On either side are grass and ragweed tall.
Flanked by the low, dark stalls of hitching sheds,
Against the blue sky, lonely and aloof,
The building rises with its scaled white wall,
Its shuttered bell tower, and grey shingled roof.
Inside the open door a patriarch stands,
Stooped over, with the bell rope in his hands.

II. A Creek

A shabby little creek that saunters slow
Within its shrunken channel through the low
And level pasture land. . . . Upon its dried
And wrinkled banks which spread to either side
Fringes of rushes stand like yellow straws
Meekly obedient to the hot, brief flaws.
Hanging from the colorless, thin sky
Above its surface, rests a dragon fly.

III. An Artificial Lick

A block of clear rock salt. . . . The rain is done;
And like a blue-white crystal, two feet square,
It lies in the spring sun between the gate
And windmill (where at night the cattle wait).
Around it the green earth is stamped and bare.
Upon its upper surface everywhere
Are little rounded cups which the glad herd
Have licked into it. A brown-coated bird
Sits puzzled at a rain-filled cup's low brink
Deliberating on his briny drink.

Allen Crafton

Eclipse

WHERE could the shadow of the earth be thrown—
If it were true the earth, whose shape was made
For holding subtleties of light and shade,
Had ever had a shadow of its own?
And never had I had a chance to learn,
Until the dimming of the moon last night,
How worlds are in a game, of throwing light
And shade upon each other as they turn.
At first, held in so close on my own ball
By blossoms and confusion of new green,
I only knew the shadows failed too soon
Which had been spattering my moonlit wall.
But then I saw what I had never seen—
The shadow of the earth upon the moon.

Louise Townsend Nicholl

Blue Book—Route 121

THERE were sights to be seen at the flaming end of summer
As we sped over the land like a flying scarf:
The kindled braziers of the mountain-ash
Swinging their wild greetings from tamed door-yards;
Gypsy-dressed zinnias, spinsters in masquerade;
The tidy farmer, raking his first brush fire,
Himself an angular shadow beside its supple aliveness;
Obliging cows, arranging themselves in pleasing groups
Over the stone sprinkled meadows;
Sun-bleached spread of a hill
And sun-dyed tapestry of an apple-tree;
Obsequious, smiling sun, Summer's gifted servant—
All these came running to the roadside
With mocking gestures of farewell.

Jean Starr Untermeyer

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Published monthly by the Editors at 449 West 22nd St., N. Y.

Edited by Maxwell Anderson, Padraic Colum, Agnes Kendrick Gray, Carolyn Hall, Frank Ernest Hill, Louise Townsend Nicholl, George O'Neil, Pitts Sanborn, Genevieve Taggard. From these nine an acting editor and an assistant are elected quarterly by the board.

Associate Editors—Robert Hillyer and David Morton

PRESENT EDITORS—PADRAIC COLUM AND CAROLYN HALL

ELECTED FOR THE FALL TERM—LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL AND AGNES KENDRICK GRAY

For an Extension of the Poetry Movement

THAT there is an increasing interest in poetry; that there is more of an impulse to write it and make a study of it than there was some years ago, is well attested: the number of magazines devoted to poetry, the number of anthologies that are published, the collections of verse that come out annually—such signs show that there is a "poetry movement" in America, and that the "movement" is well under way. No doubt this "movement" is favorable to the making of poetry—the poet writing in America to-day is at least aware that there is an audience for his work.

I have been talking to a poet-friend who has a conviction that the poetry movement, such as it is, could be extended, and, in being extended, become richer, make new contacts, seize upon new material. . . . I am writing this near a little town in New Hampshire. I have been with this man to see a play in the Town House.

He has been talking to me about the play. It is a play that was on Broadway three years ago—a musical comedy with dances, choruses, songs, and a dialogue that passes for being bright. I was not able to follow the plot of the play, nor was I able to make myself attentive to the words of the songs. But the methods of production as outlined by my friend has made me interested.

Down here the Broadway play is performed in the main by the cele-

brated "local talent." Apparently everyone in the town who can even begin to sing, everyone who can be taught to walk across the stage or to speak a line, has been brought into the play—young men, boys, girls, children, infants. All the high school classes have been drawn from, all the congregations, all the associations. This is what happens. A gentleman comes to a little town such as this, with a Broadway play such as this. He offers to train "the local talent," to supervise rehearsals, to put on the play in a fairly creditable manner, dividing the profits, fifty-fifty, with some local organization. The offer is taken up with enthusiasm, and this stale Broadway play goes on, creditable enough, and with a real artistic excitement back of it—the excitement of the boys and girls and children of such a little town as this.

Why should all this excitement and all this co-operative spirit be given solely to such a stale and uninspired thing as an out-of-date Broadway musical comedy? Why should not such a little town as this put its artistic excitement and its co-operation back of something that is really imaginative, that has some touch of wisdom or beauty, something that they could enter into with more passion than they enter into this play, something that in turn would help to make them creative? So my friend asks.

Why not? But I ask my friend to remember that in this generation also the children of the world are wiser than the children of light. The play from Broadway is put up in a can. A can-opener is supplied. The firm has a salesman to go in advance. It is something that a little town like this can buy and be pleased with its purchase.

It would buy the imaginative play too, my friend rejoins, if the same conditions of sale were attended to. . . . Then he goes on to say that the imaginative play that he has in mind has not yet been written. He says, too, that the writing of it is the way to extend the poetry movement that is under way in this country.

What should it be like, this imaginative play that would engage the enthusiasm and the co-operative spirit of a little town such as this? It should not be drab, my friend says, it should not be high-brow. The dramatist should start with the idea of a loosely constructed play that could take in the boys and the girls and the infants. A chronicle-play out of American history, perhaps. There should be choruses and dancing. And then he says that it should not be presented in the spirit of service nor in the community spirit. That way, he thinks, lies Puritanism, and all the repressions.

Listening to my friend I begin to think that such a story as Vachel Lindsay has ramped with in "Johnny Appleseed" might be made into a play that would appeal to this folk and that might be sold to them as the wise gentleman from Broadway sells his musical comedy.

The poetry movement, says my friend, has already saved for imaginative service many young and ardent spirits. It has given them a hope of doing something creative. Why should they not consider doing a play for the American locality that could, in a quiet and non-advertised way, make the round of certain American little towns? My friend dislikes mass-action, and he maintains that it needs no organization to do all this. A few young people, working in the spirit in which they work for different poetry and art journals and radical publications could get the plays written and sold and produced in the way that the Broadway play has been produced here.

To all this I reply that much more than youth and ardent spirit go to the making of a good play—and the play will be of no use if it is not a good one—a long training and a disillusioning experience go to the making of a play. My friend then talks of how such associations as the Provincetown Players and the School of Drama in the Carnegie Technical Institute in Pittsburgh could help. I agree that some of the poets in America could do honorable work by helping to create such plays as my friend has in mind. I agree with him that it is the poets only who can create them. By seizing upon new subjects, by drawing upon dramatic speech they could greatly enrich their poetry. I am reminded how greatly Irish poetry profited by the creation of Irish drama with its new character and its new speech.

Padraic Colum

A Prejudiced Word on Amy Lowell

Legends, by Amy Lowell. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston and New York.

BY the accepted standards I am the last person who should write a review of Amy Lowell's *Legends,* for I have read all her books of verse save one without taking whole-hearted pleasure in a solitary poem or a solitary passage. Yet though my point of view is prejudiced I am not in

this respect very different from the average reviewer. As most of the published prejudices concerning Miss Lowell are favorable, so are mine adverse.

Not that I am entirely blind to her excellences. Surely no man with an eye for color or a liking for the exact image could fail to discover in Amy Lowell such a master of observation as can hardly be matched in English aside from Ruskin. She knows drawing and the palette; she lays on color with a sure hand. Her technique, the result of study and an amazing talent, has quite dazzled the critics of this corner of the continent. In one of the poems of the present volume—*A Legend of Porcelain*—these gifts are displayed as lavishly as in anything she has published.

But there is no life in it, nor in anything else she has done. She works in synthetic chemistry, imitating life with skill but never creating, never recreating. She knows all the tricks of the trade; the semblance of life is startling, and one remembers that a puppet show is harder to stage than a drama—but there is no avoiding the conclusion that here is nothing real, nothing worthy of any emotion except admiration.

Miss Lowell's technique, so unfailing in respect to detail, fails lamentably in narrative movement. Her poems are static, either single images or successions of images—there is no development, no unfolding under the eyes. She is, in my opinion, a cutter of gems. She does them perfectly, one at a time, and strings them; they are hard, vari-colored, and decorative. They go nicely with evening gowns and formal affairs. But her music is light and brittle, her characters are foils, her words flash in emptiness. She is a great craftsman without anything to say.

Maxwell Anderson.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hereafter THE MEASURE will be published by the Editors instead of by Frank Shay. All communications, business and editorial, should be sent to 449 West 22nd Street, New York City.

There are three changes on the editorial board of the magazine: David Morton will act in future as associate editor, Pitts Sanborn has been elected to the active board, and Robert Hillyer has been elected associate editor.

Louise Townsend Nicholl has been elected editor of THE MEASURE for the next quarter, September, October and November, and Agnes Kendrick Gray, assistant editor.

Do You Know Someone Who Would Like To Subscribe?

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MAXWELL ANDERSON
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AGNES KENDRICK GRAY
CAROLYN HALL
FRANK ERNEST HILL
GEORGE O'NEIL
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Published Monthly by

THE EDITORS

at

449 West 22nd Street, New York City

And on sale at the following bookshops:

Frank Shay's Bookshop.....4 Christopher Street, New York City
The Sunwise Turn, Inc.....51 East 44th Street, New York City
The Washington Square Bookshop..27 West 8th Street, New York City
Brentano's.....Fifth Avenue and 27th Street, New York City

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